Notes (04/24/2024)

For some reason, all we did these last three weeks has to be summed up to a note, but ok, let’s take a look at this.

Snowden

(TW = Spoilers)
Working for the United States government, as with any job, has both pluses and minuses. First, governmental work especially involving the National Security Agency gives their employees security clearance and access to the United States undercover information. While this top-secret information may be fascinating to know, this knowledge comes with a great responsibility and trust. Even if you don't necessarily agree with what the government is doing, it is your job to perform and execute the job description or how it is outlined by your supervisors. "Snowden" directed by Oliver Stone is a movie based off of a real life story when Edward Snowden, a contract worker for the National Security Agency, leaked top-secret information about the United States government's tactics of surveillance to news agencies because he didn't agree with what the United States was doing and wanted people to know about what was happening. Some people believe Snowden's actions were a public service and people should know what the government is doing to keep track of them whereas others think that Snowden is a traitor to the United States. Despite the controversy surrounding Edward Snowden's leak of this information, the movie "Snowden" portrays his actions as a public service to citizens rather than betrayal against the government. The movie is told in retrospect of Snowden looking back on his whole experience working for the government as he tells the press what happened. Through these series of flashbacks, Snowden is able to illustrate his point of view about what the government is doing. Joseph Gordon-Levitt, the actor playing Edward Snowden in the movie is a very respectable actor whose appearance and demeanor resemble Snowden and is well cast. Thus by casting Gordon-Levitt, the very second the audience sees "Snowden" they sense a familiar face and safe feeling. The film begins with Snowden's life prior to employment at the National Security Agency. Early scenes include his military training before being discharged secondary to his lower extremity injuries, education prior to entering the Central Intelligence Agency as well as meeting his girlfriend, Lindsay Mills. These scenes show different emotions and characteristics of Snowden. Through this backstory, the viewer is able to see Snowden's background, which helps the viewer to see him as a fairly "regular" moral U.S. citizen. Ultimately, including these scenes was a strategy in helping the viewer "bond" with Snowden. The movie's storyline then builds to the conflict. Snowden is exposed to various government secrets and the ways the government keeps tabs on people. Snowden has a realization in the movie that citizens are treated

more like objects sitting in a database than real-life human beings with rights that should be protected, not exposed by the U.S. government. Intense and emotional scenes show how much Snowden was grappling with what to do-- he was so deeply bothered knowing this yet did not want to betray his own country. Many people surrounding Snowden in the movie, were not too bothered by what was occurring, which further emphasizes the director's goal of making Snowden a hero. Once Snowden releases the information, he flees America for protection from the U.S. government. During the last scene, the director cuts from the actor playing Snowden, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, to the real Edward Snowden. The resemblance between the actor and the real Snowden, the smooth transition, and the whole idea behind the last shot really make the movie seem real to the viewer. This was an interesting twist, not usually used in movies, but was well done and seemed effective and intriguing. Overall, this movie was a way for Snowden to share his story with the world, while he is in hiding in Russia, without censorship or influence by any authority. He was able to tell his side of the story without rebuttal about how the government was keeping watch on innocent U.S. citizens. Although many of Snowden's points may be valid, this movie was biased and looked at the issue from only one point of view. The movie did not fully acknowledge how much the government is able to do with this information it gathers in terms of public safety. Snowden makes U.S. citizens question the role of government in protecting individuals as well as also makes people wonder about the level of loyalty and morality government employees must have and maintain and to what extent.

Rating 9/10

The Antisocial Network

(TW = Spoilers)
The movie is a really good documentary that gets into the world of online culture, putting light on its unintended consequences with chilling great precision. Its directors make a narrative that is both relevant and overly interesting, tracing the evolution of internet memes from harmless jokes to tools for manipulation and misinformation. Through interviews with the participants, the film offers a unique perspective on the spiral of online actions into real-world chaos. The documentary's strength lies in its seamless editing, which expertly puts together interviews, many memes, and news footage to create a creative timeline of events. While primarily focusing on the rise of 4chan, it also touches on broader internet platforms, though some areas could benefit from deeper exploration. What sets the film apart is its ability to provoke thought and introspection. It serves as a small reminder of the responsibility we have online and the potential for memes to become harmful realities. The score subtly enhances the tension, while the interviewers greatly guide the narrative to draw interesting commentary from participants. While some may

dismiss it as left-leaning propaganda, the documentary's impact lies in its ability to spark conversation and awareness. It's a must-watch for anyone interested in understanding the internet's influence on society and the pressing need for digital literacy and accountability. The film may have its bad thingies, but its impact is undeniable. It's a thought-provoking journey that leaves a lasting impression, urging viewers to consider the power of online culture. In a world where misinformation runs wild, this documentary serves as a library of truth, allowing us to navigate the digital landscape with caution and critical thinking.

Rating: 9/10 Stars

Opinion on Memes, Hacktivism and Whistleblowing

Memes:

- They’re funny.

Hacktivism:

- Cool, but keep it to yourself, lil bro.

Whistleblowing:

- The greater good.

Glossary

Name	Desc.
Whistleblowing	The act of exposing information or activities that are deemed illegal, unethical, or not in the public interest, typically within an organization or government.
Hacktivism	A blend of hacking and activism, hacktivism involves the use of computer systems and networks to promote political or social causes.
Surveillance	The monitoring of behavior, activities, or information for the purpose of influencing, managing, or directing.
Encryption	The process of encoding information in such a way that only authorized parties can access it.

Metadata	Data that provides information about other data. In the context of communication and surveillance, metadata can include details such as the time, location, and participants of a communication.
Cybersecurity	The practice of protecting computer systems, networks, and data from digital attacks.
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)	A law that allows individuals to request access to federal agency records.
Censorship	The suppression or restriction of speech, expression, or information.
Anonymity	The state of being anonymous or unidentified.
Ethical Hacking	The practice of testing computer systems and networks for vulnerabilities in order to improve security.

Also view at https://sites.google.com/view/owca/notes/04-24-2024